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ORIGINAL

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February 11, 2003

Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street S.W.
Washington, D.C 20554

Confirmed
FEB 26 2003
Distribution Center

Re: The attached

Mr. Powell,

Does the attached represent the best we can do for a community to ensure different ideas and opinions? I hope not.

The GM for the WB TV station reports to the Publisher for the newspaper- both owned by Tribune. NBC 6 produces the newscast for the WB TV station.

In substance, though not form, we have "one voice". We deserve better.

A Concerned Citizen

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MEDIA OVERKILL

Oliphant story used as excuse to evade issues

BY DOZELL VARNER JR.

The axiom "Perception is reality" is often an unfortunate truth. It is further unfortunate when the powerful media *mix* overkill with a slanted perspective to create an uncalled-for hysteria.

When it comes to Miriam Oliphant, Broward County's supervisor of elections, most of the mainstream local media *are* on the same fast pace as the South Florida Sun-Sentinel in poisoning and *polarizing an entire* community.

Could it be that the hysteria created daily for your reading and viewing pleasure is an absolute escape from covering the real issues of the hurting humanity caught in impoverished, underemployed and often hopeless communities?

Words such as inept and *incompetent* have been etched into our psyches through more than 100 days of bombardment from less-than-courageous journalists. *Sun-Sentinel* reporters pass on opportunities to investigate, say, the *Sword* land deal or the funding, or lack thereof, of school projects —

The newspaper *does* not *see* the hurt it has inflicted on the African-American community.

to name just two. *Has* the same County Commission, which some hold so righteous in *this* matter, endured the same tenacious, microscopic inspection of your reporters lately?

The *Sun-Sentinel* has not only *poisoned our community with its* demonstrated disdain for objectivity in journalism, it resorts to the unfortunate tactic of throwing out half-quotes and half-points. This is a proven technique in the *art* of advocacy; however, for the sake of us who know most sides of this issue, do the South Florida media expect us to accept this *as* accurate coverage?

As columnist Mike Mayo *asks* Mrs. Oliphant to "jump ship," readers *are* challenged to hear a similar request seeking the commission's *censuring* of Lori Parrish, whose unprofessional and vicious attacks (which seem very personal) on the supervisor have

been the real Broward County embarrassment. Better yet, did we *miss* a series similar in longevity about Katherine Harris, the former Florida secretary of state, who embarrassed our nation in the world community in the 2000 *gift* of the presidency to George W. Bush?

Enough about the obvious. Like Martin Luther King's question, we ask: "Where do we go *from* here?"

At the end of an excruciating day at Tuesday's County Commission workshop with the supervisor, several African-American clergy and business leaders met with the Editorial Board of the *Sun-Sentinel*. We informed the board that our concerns are deeper than Mrs. Oliphant, that she is a symbol for our community. At this point our community *feels* the media have perpetrated the immorality of untruths and half-truths. This is not the proverbial race card — this is reality.

I left that meeting with optimism that we would collectively and constructively cutting losses and building a new future. I believed that this new strategy would lead to healthy dialogue which would ultimately be the publication's leading thread in education reforms and the economic empowerment of our community.

I left believing that the powerless communities would receive the same attention as the powerful consistently *en* thinking that the *Sun-Sentinel* the way that our community is a result of the Oliphant would immediately move from hurtful to helpful.

After reading two days of the same-old same-old, I ask: "eternal optimist?"

The Rev. Dozell Varner writing on behalf of the African American Clergy for A Broward County.

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FEB 24 2003

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